

## Emergency Preparedness – Perfect Practice

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“Practice makes perfect.” You’ve heard the saying before. You’ve admitted you are at risk for emergencies. You’ve created a plan. Now you need to practice that plan.

Famous dancer and choreographer Martha Graham said “We learn by practice. Whether it means to learn to dance by practicing dancing or to learn to live by practicing living, the principles are the same.”

If your emergency plan calls for you to evacuate your home out of a second story window, do you have a ladder ready?

If your plan calls for you to stay in your home for 10 days during an influenza pandemic, do you have 10 days worth of food and water in your emergency supplies kit? Do you have medical supplies such as a thermometer, latex gloves and fluids in case someone in your home gets ill?

Practice your plan. This is the only way to discover its weaknesses. Choose unusual times during the day to practice. Remember, disasters don’t follow our schedules. Test to see whether your children wake up during the night if the fire alarm goes off. Check to see how your family reacts by practicing when you are separated. Interrupt family meals, early morning showers or bedtime snuggles with a practice tornado warning.

After running your practice drills, evaluate yourself and your family. How did you do? Did everyone follow the plan? Did the plan work? Are there parts of the plan that need to be adjusted? It is much better to reveal the weaknesses in your plan during a practice run, than during an actual disaster.

You’ve admitted you are at risk. You’ve planned ahead. You’ve practiced. Don’t stop there.

Football coach Vince Lombardi said “Practice doesn’t make perfect, *perfect* practice makes perfect.” Start practicing today and keep it up until your family is comfortable responding to any disaster – perfectly.

For more information, visit [www.dhss.mo.gov](http://www.dhss.mo.gov) or contact the Springfield-Greene County Health Department at (417) 864-1658.